

McCrossin/Craglow house  
731 W. Montgomery Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

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731 West Montgomery Avenue is sited diagonally on lot 16 facing the intersection of Nelson and Rt. 28.

#### I. Summary

The McCrossin/Craglow House at 731 W. Montgomery Avenue sits on a trapezoidal lot whose front line is actually on Nelson Street at its northeast corner with W. Montgomery Avenue. (See attached plat of West End Park on next page, L/F JA 13/445). The house is a c. 1941 wood frame one-and-a-half-story Craftsman style bungalow with asbestos siding, apparently original, and painted yellow. When traveling west on W. Montgomery Avenue, it is the last house before reaching Interstate Highway 270 the first house seen when entering the older part of Rockville from the east from I-270 and MD. Route 28.

Part of the West End Park subdivision, the property was offered for sale by Henry Copp in 1890, but not purchased until 1941. The West Montgomery National Register Historic District lies partly in West End Park. MHT surveys have been conducted on 720 and 710 W. Montgomery Avenue, as well as on several houses in the 500 block of Anderson Avenue slightly to the northeast. The West End Park Civic Association is active in trying to maintain high standards in the West End. Although the neighborhood is zoned residential, next door to #731 is the imposing Seventh Day Adventist Church. The Church is owned by the Potomac Conference Corporation of Seventh Day Adventists, 606 Greenville Avenue, Staunton, Va., 24401. Over time, the church purchased original lots 14, 13, 12, 11, and part of lot 10 of Block 3, and resubdivided them as Lot 45 in 1974.<sup>1</sup> (plat attached at end of document)



## II. Architectural and Design Significance

The house at 731 W. Montgomery Avenue is at the juncture of the 1950's or sixties brick one and two story houses in the unit block of Nelson Street and the church and converted homes that make up the Seventh Day Adventist property to the east on the north side of W. Montgomery Avenue.



Above right: view north on Nelson Street



View across W. Montgomery Avenue



To the West across Nelson Street is Interstate Highway 270, where originally another block of West End Park subdivision extended. At W. Montgomery is a busy intersection and ramps on and off Highway 270. Across and to the east on the south side of six-lane W. Montgomery are some modest ramblers and substantial Victorians. Access to #731 is limited—the driveway onto Nelson Street can only be approached from the west-bound lanes of W. Montgomery and there is no street parking possible.



Intersection of Nelson Street and West Montgomery Avenue (Maryland Route 28)

The house is a c. 1941 wood frame one-and-a-half-story Craftsman style bungalow with asbestos siding, apparently original, and painted yellow. It is set back on its 50 foot wide and approximately 262 feet deep lot.(see attached plats) Its driveway is parallel to its west side and on the property line with #3 Nelson Street. Its steeply pitched cross-gable roof is relieved by two peaked dormers in the front over a porch sheltered by a deep shed roof. The front door is flanked by pairs of double-hung windows and a pair of casements on the west front. A red brick fireplace is attached to the east side of the house, which has casement windows on the first floor. A shed dormer in the rear roof connects the original part of the house to its narrow two-story addition. This addition in turn has a shed porches on either side and a peaked tunnel entrance to the full basement. A second brick chimney exits the roof in the rear. The German-board sided single garage has a front gable and shed additions on the east side and rear. The yard is landscaped with mature trees and shrubs and shows remnants of its former glory.



731 West Montgomery Avenue front (south) elevation

rear (north) elevation

The front porch railing has been altered and a look through the front windows reveals that modern inexpensive vertical wood veneer paneling has been applied on the first floor walls. The exterior of the house needs basic maintenance.

### III. History and significance

The McCrossin /Craglow House sits on Lot 16 of Block 3 on W. Montgomery Avenue, the southern edge of "West End Park." This 520-acre subdivision, platted in 1890 by Henry Copp, was then adjoining the City of Rockville. West Montgomery Avenue (also Maryland Route 28), was then known as the Rockville-Darnestown Road. Across W. Montgomery Avenue from #731 in the Roxboro subdivision, were several large Victorian houses, built when the area was developing as a resort.<sup>2</sup> Few homes were built as far out as the 700 block of the north side of W. Montgomery Avenue before World War II. Then modest bungalows began to be constructed on W. Montgomery and Anderson Avenue to its north.<sup>3</sup> The McCrossin/Craglow House is one of those typical bungalows that characterized Rockville's building stock of that time.

To put together his resort and residential development, Henry Copp had purchased land from a number of owners, including 247-1/2 acres for \$50,000 from John T. Vinson. Following the Depression of 1893, Vinson foreclosed and it was from his estate that Vernon Joseph and Maude B. McCrossin bought Lot 16 in 1941 for \$450.<sup>4</sup> Because of the price of the lot, it can be assumed that there was no house on it at that time. The McCrossins owned the house until 1950 and can be assumed to be the ones who built it. Maude McCrossin (b. 4/19/1907, d. 9/20/1977) predeceased her husband Vernon (b. 2/22/1891), both of whom are buried at Darnestown Presbyterian Church.<sup>5</sup>

The McCrossins sold it to James Sullivan, unmarried, in 1950, and he quickly turned it over to Kenneth C. and Rose C. Craglow in 1952.<sup>6</sup> In 1957, the Craglows enlarged their yard and garden by purchasing the vacant Lot 15 adjoining theirs and fronting on W. Montgomery Avenue. Conveying it to them were Lillian and William Posey, who also owned Lot #14, where the Seventh Day Adventist Church now sits.<sup>7</sup> The Poseys had bought Lot #15 from the estate of John T. Vinson in 1941 at the same time the McCrossins had bought Lot #16.<sup>8</sup> (The 1900 Census lists William ("boatman") and Lillie Posey and their infant son Thomas living near Violet's Lock on the C and O Canal.<sup>9</sup>) The Craglows owned the house until her death in 1985.

Kenneth Craglow died before Rose (Dec. 12/17/1985, adm. # 093-12-85), and her estate in 1986 sold Lots #16 (with the house at #731) and vacant lot #15 for \$98,000.<sup>10</sup> The estate's personal representative was Marvin L. Smith, neighbor at #3 Nelson Street since 1961. Mr. Smith described the Craglows as exemplary neighbors who kept the house and large yard and garden immaculate. He was told by the Craglows that a previous owner who was a barber had put on the rear addition to the house and used it as his barber shop. The purchaser of #731 in 1986 was David A. Eisner, a local dentist who hoped to build a dental clinic on the property. When that did not work out because of zoning problems, Dr. Eisner sold the two lots for \$132,000 to the Potomac Conference Corporation of Seventh Day Adventists, which had built a sanctuary on Lot #14, previously owned by the Poseys. The house that had stood on Lot #14 was in disrepair and was burned by the fire department as a training exercise.<sup>11</sup>

After acquiring the house which had been vacant since 1985, the church upgraded its systems and rented it as subsidized, low-income housing, as part of its social services program. For instance, until her death, an AIDS patient and her family lived there. Later Elizabeth Henderson rented the house with her sons. Ms. Henderson raised rabbits in the garage. Her sons built the plywood addition on the rear of the house. Since Ms Henderson moved out of the house in December, 2000, it has been unoccupied and untended.<sup>12</sup> It is currently offered for sale.

- <sup>1</sup> Plat #10826.
- <sup>2</sup> See MHT forms for 720 and 710 W. Montgomery Avenue, MCHS.
- <sup>3</sup> See MHT form for 529 Anderson Avenue, MCHS.
- <sup>4</sup> MHT form for 529 Anderson Avenue, by Anne Cissel, MCHS files; partial plat A/42 attached; L/F JA 21/322, 9/11/1890; L/F 830/394, 5/24/41.
- <sup>5</sup> MCHS cemetery files.
- <sup>6</sup> L/F 1449/158, 10/26/1950; L/F 1658/76, 4/15/1952.
- <sup>7</sup> L/F 2323/91, 3/12/1957
- <sup>8</sup> L/F 835/10, 6/12/1941.
- <sup>9</sup> Hurley, William, Montgomery County Census for 1900, MCHS.
- <sup>10</sup> L/F 7180/144, 6/25/1986.
- <sup>11</sup> L/F 8125/49, 5/22/1987, interview with Marvin L. Smith, 3/2/2001.
- <sup>12</sup> Smith interview.

Below: Seventh Day Adventist Church of Rockville, immediately east of 731 W. Montgomery Ave.  
Plat showing location of combined church property and adjacent lot 15.

